1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



they had been called upon to pay a chena tax as well as 1·50 Rs. per adult male road tax. Of course they were unable to collect this money and they dreaded the ensuing penalty, that of serving on the roads, for should the two young men leave the settlement the old man and woman and the girl must starve, the first being too old to work and the woman a cripple. Their plight would have been just as bad had the young man gone to work on some Sinhalese rice fields in order to earn the money[1].

Degenerate Veddas in the neighbourhood of the main Badulla-Batticaloa road[2]. The main road from Badulla to the east coast passes through country that was once the centre of the Vedirata, and on either side of it at a distance of some 2—6 miles are various settlements of half-bred and degenerate Veddas who will soon be entirely lost among the Sinhalese. Plate XIV, figure 1, represents two men of this class: it is obvious that the young man would pass for a Sinhalese, indeed in spite of his bow and arrows and traditional scanty Vedda garb the condition of his hair shows that he has at least been following a Sinhalese mode of life. It is possible that the whole Vedda get-up may have been assumed for our benefit, though in view of the comparative skill with which he handled his bow we do not think this likely. The old man was doubtless one of the last degenerate Veddas of the district.

Before passing to village Veddas a word must be said concerning the Omuni folk and those of Unuwatura Bubula. Sir James Emerson Tennant, in his work *Ceylon* published in 1859, states that Mr Atherton, A.G.A., in conjunction with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries, attempted to civilise the Veddas[3]. In 1838 "cottages were built for them in their own district, rice land assigned to them, wells dug, coconuts planted, two communities were speedily settled at Vippammadvo." A

[1] This is a not uncommon practice at the present day.

[2] This road is only some forty or fifty years old, Mr Warren tells me that "the old road from Badulla to Batticaloa joined the road from Alutnuwara. It crossed the present cart road about Kallodi and must have worked its way in the neighbourhood of the present road to Tumpalanchalai and so to the ferry into Batticaloa." Part of this track is still used as a short cut. "There was another road from Passera through Medagama past Makakandiyaweva to Mandur; *tavilam* travel that way now."

[3] Tennant, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 447.

1: Seligmann and Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



177 school was founded and two other settlements fromed at
621 Oomany and Villengelavelly. However, the enterprise was soon
797 abandoned owing to the misconduct of some of the teachers.
"But," continues Tennant, "the good effects of even this temporary experiment were apparent; not one of the Veddas returned to his cave and savage habits... The other colony at Oomany continues to the present day prosperous and successful, twenty-five families are resident around it, rice and other grains are produced in sufficiency and coconuts are planted near the cottages. The only desertions have been the departures of those in search of employment, who have removed to other villages in quest of it. The school was closed in 1847 owing to there being no more children at the time requiring instruction..."

177 The colony can no longer be called "prosperous and success-
62 ful," indeed, we found it in a state of semi-starvation. Before 1838, when these people were induced to settle, there can be little doubt that they were living in a somewhat similar condition to the Sitala Wanniya Veddas of the present day, but since then there has been a considerable infusion of foreign blood, for it has long been the habit of criminals and others desirous of concealment, to seek refuge with the village Veddas, who usually receive them kindly and accept them as members of their community. Since the artificial origin of this settlement is known it cannot be regarded as belonging to the village Veddas, but rather to a colony of degenerate settled Veddas.

511 Omuni. At Maha Oya three half-bred Veddas from Omuni
687 were seen who had been brought in by the Sinhalese headman to work on the road as they had not paid their "road tax." It was unnecessary for them to plead they were poor and hungry, for their miserable condition showed this all too clearly. Happily Mr. S. W. Woodhouse, the district judge, was then in Maha Oya and realising that while these men were absent from their village, their women and children would be in a worse plight than ever, he excused them their tax and sent them back to
511 Omuni. About a week later we visited Omuni and although we were met with the customary gift of honey to which were added a few berries, it was obvious that the settlement was really short of food and this in spite of a number of families having left some